MARVEL

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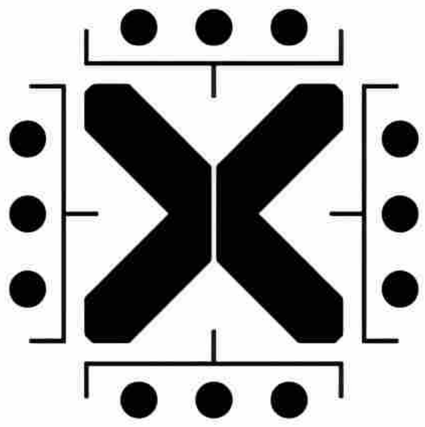
[_of_X]

013

GILLEN
WERNECK
CURIEL

IMMORTAL X-MEN

BROOKS

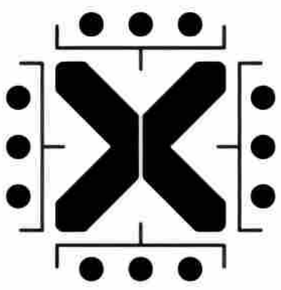


[Immortal_[0.13]

“No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as any manor of thy friend’s or of thine own were; any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.”

-- JOHN DONNE,
MEDITATION XVII,
DEVOTIONS UPON EMERGENT
OCCASIONS

[Immortal_[0.13]
[Immortal_[0.13]



[Immortal_[0.13]
[Immortal_[0.13]

They talk and talk, and I watch and watch. *We* watch.

Krakoa and I, the quietest part of the Quiet Council.

And while the arguments rage over revealing what Sinister did and then undid...

...I notice something.

The leaves.

I ask Krakoa what's happening.

They tell me.

It is a complicated answer--of scents, pheromones, the moaning of bark, juxtaposed with the whisper of wind through fronds.

They speak in what feels like shivers down my arm, through their biotech that filled the space Warlock left.

It features many complexities--of the specifics of its biosystem, its diet, the time, the place...

...but they sum it up in a single word.

It is a word that has many meanings in Krakoa's language...

...it has at least two meanings in English too.

Why are the leaves rotting?

It's Fall.

[00_mutants_of_X]
[00_the_world__X]

IMMORTAL

ONE MUTANT IS AN ISLAND.

The Quiet Council stands divided. With the secrets of the Sinister timeline revealed and Mister Sinister's plans to insert his genes into the resurrection process laid bare, many of the recently resurrected council members, Xavier, Hope, Exodus, Emma Frost and Destiny, have had their voting rights on the Council stripped until it is proved conclusively they are safe from infection.

Such rapid consolidation of powers has greatly destabilized the working nature of the Quiet Council and left only a handful of members with the ability to vote -- though it seems that some of those members have been corrupted by other methods beyond Sinister's machinations. Shaw and Selene by their greed and collusion with the anti-mutant organization Orchis and Mother Righteous.* Colossus by the control of a powerful mutant writer enslaved by his brother, Mikhail Rasputin.

Only time will tell if Krakoa can weather this storm.

*See X-MEN: BEFORE THE FALL – SINISTER FOUR #1!

[AUTUMN]

[PROFESSOR X]

[HOPE SUMMERS]

[DESTINY]

[SPRING]

[EMMA FROST]

[SEBASTIAN SHAW]

[KATE PRYDE]

[CYPHER]

[SUMMER]

[NIGHTCRAWLER]

[STORM]

[COLOSSUS]

[WINTER]

[EXODUS]

[SELENE]

[MYSTIQUE]

[KRAKOA]

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[00_mutants_of_X]
[00_the_world__X]

[00_00....0]
[00_00...13]

The outside world knows about the Sinister timeline. It's gone as well as anyone expected. I didn't think Colossus could be so naive...yet here we are.

The cynics were right. Krakoa had a secret plan to take over the world in the worst possible way. Didn't matter if it was just Sinister. He was on the council. His sins are ours.

Emma went to the U.N. on a personal mission. It didn't go great.

We all saw the footage. It looked deeply upsetting.

Is there any personal perspective you wish to add?

"Enough, you worms!"

You can't kill me. You will just kill yourselves. You will all stop it!

Immediately!

MUTANTS SINNERS

DIE MUTANTS

DIE SINNERS!

DIE

Ms. Frost...

...the Phoenix Foundation brought her back.

Is our little girl safe?

I think she is.

You *think* she is?

No. Nothing to add. It's not good.

It isn't. Orders have gone through the floor.

They don't trust our product anymore.

They don't want five more years of life?

Fine. Let them rush into the grave all the sooner. There are many who will inherit the earth, but the stupid are not among their number.

The problem, my little fanatic, is Krakoa is not a self-sustaining nation.

We *sell* goods and *buy* what we need. If our goods are not being bought, we cannot afford our little paradise. We perhaps have months?

God, this is where I am. Peering at graphs. I did not join the X-Men to spend all my time peering at *graphs.*

Shaw--you're a businessman. You should have seen this coming before you joined up with the metal buffoon!

And Colossus? Your ethics! Save us from *ethics!*

Hell, if Kurt hadn't gone off to have a little cry, he'd probably have voted for it too.

Emma. *Stop.*

Kurt has suffered almost unimaginable trauma. His form was warped, monstrously, painfully. He was used as a tool by Orchis to murder--a violation that clearly shakes him to his core. He has had the very concept of hope torn from him.

During Judgment Day, he resurrected himself over ***twenty*** times, choosing to remember each death.

I advised him against it but didn't stop him.

We are complicit in Kurt's pain. That he felt the need to leave is on ***us.***

We have been poor custodians of each other. We have failed our duty of care.

Oh god, Xavier. That you can be like this makes me understand how you break the heart of the people who actually love you.

I'm not sure which of us is worse.

Me, who ***pretends*** not to care...

...or you, who so obviously cares, then does everything that you do.

Why are people without votes hogging the floor?

Oh, Selene, I wish Hope had acted earlier so I could have kicked down the door and pulled out your heart and not have to put up with you on the council.

We kept to the rules. That matters.

It shows we are still who we are.

Really? You think playing a good boy proves Sinister *isn't* inside you?

Maybe you stopping me was what Sinister wanted so we can have Little Miss Mall Goth on the council?

Maybe it all--

It doesn't matter if she's presently on the council.

She should be gone.

Selene has broken *our* laws.

Destiny speaks, and everyone is suspicious. No one trusts her anymore.

However, if she's speaking, she's saying things that she ***thinks*** can make a difference.

"She's working with Orchis! She's working with Orchis!" Get a new tune. Your credibility is gone, my girl.

Wait--maybe I'm a prophet too! Secondary mutation!

Selene sees the future...

...and you have none, Irene!

You misunderstand. You do not need my gift to know you are a traitor.

All you require is memory.

Selene attacked Krakoa, desecrating the land. That's a sacred rule.

We sent one council member to the Pit. We should send another.

This isn't the time. We need things calmer if we're not to fall to infighting. With five council members without votes, we will tear ourselves apart if we just play power games.

We need to find a way to repair the council before we can do anything else.

Get Sinister out of the Pit and let me tear the truth out of his head.

We can discover whether he still has his claws in us or not.

Good plan. Let Sinister out... and what? Hope he doesn't just take over you all?

The whole world has seen what *could* happen. It's way too early for a sequel to that. It's too big a risk, at least yet.

I repeat: Selene in the Pit. Or at least off the council.

Having her vote removed would do.

Destiny keeps pressing it, even when people are trying to move on. She knows that they're not going to agree with her.

That means there's subtext.

Are you threatening me, Irene? Do you want me to have another magical tantrum?

I can do it.

Do you want me to shoot you through the head again?

I can do it.

Oh, you are such a flirt.

You're back from the dead. If you had returned from the Five's resurrection, you would have no vote too.

You'd be as possibly compromised as we are.

Ah. There it is.

I understand.

I came back by magical methods.

Sinister doesn't have his fingers dug into ***me.***

Selene doesn't.

But Exodus?

We have an easy solution to our dilemma.

Exodus does.

She dies.

The Five bring her back.

She loses her vote.

There've been just shy of twenty thousand years of corpses of people who've tried that, Exodus.

And I don't see any magic metal to help you here.

You do not understand my power, witch.

You cannot resist the true mutant divine.

I will separate every molecule of you and scatter it to the four corners of existence.

And there is nothing you can do to stop me.

She can't.

I will.

Really?

I feel Krakoa's tension behind me. I know if they thought things were going to get bad, they'd look after me.

So I presume this can't be *that* bad.

I hope they're right.

You fight for a monster.

I fight for Krakoa.

I do... but *I also* fight for Krakoa.

And know this...

Would someone who truly fights for Krakoa do that?

...if we fight...

...if we *truly* unleashed our power...

...we would kill *everyone* on this island.

That was unacceptable, Exodus.

It was...

ARGGHH!

...but what can you do about it?

Sabretooth, you could put in a Pit.

Sinister. Maybe Selene. *But me?* Or *Storm?*

If we *choose* not to be governed, *we* cannot be governed. That we allow ourselves to be is the pretense that allows our utopia.

I laughed at the Arakkii and their battles, but they know the simple truth--there is only power, and those whose power means they *cannot* be controlled and *choose* not to be controlled must lead...or the state cannot hold.

That's why we need the common purpose. Something for us all to believe in so we *choose* to be together...

...but there is no common purpose. I tried to make one but... it's a lie.

I fight for Krakoa, but there is no Krakoa.

We compromised with the devil.

We invited all the snakes into the Garden of Eden and expected it to *remain* the Garden of Eden.

What were we thinking?

Exodus breaks and goes where there're no words.

Hope sees it. She's furious with him right now for dozens of reasons. Yet...

Exodus. Bennet. Come on, man.

Walk it off.

There's the Krakoa he fought for, the Krakoa he doesn't think exists.

I knew what I had to do...

...or, really, what *we* have to do.

Hey, Professor.

Doug. I'm sorry--I have a lot of work to do before the council reconvenes. I hope it's not too late to salvage this.

Do you have a message from Krakoa or--?

I do... but not in *that* way.

I've got a message from *Krakoa.*

As in, it's from *everyone on this island.*

You are so tarnished that you can't save us.

You try, and you're going to drag us all down with you.

Have I lost even you, Doug?

Read my mind. I've prepared something.

There're some things you should know.

[Correspondence...[X]
[Recipient....Xavier]

Dear Professor,

Have you noticed the leaves on Krakoa falling? I have. I know why.

We've been bad. I've been bad, mainly by trying to be good. I let Moira go when Destiny and Mystique schemed to kill her. Most of all, I haven't been running the Pit as you wanted. You, Emma, Exodus, Hope and Sinister were the only people who actually got the "trapped feeling nothing" thing. Everyone else, I gave them a psychic place to be. Sabretooth used that, and it's why he and everyone you put in with him escaped and why the Pit is actually empty bar Sinister and the Struckers. I've been hiding that from you.

I'm sorry that I betrayed you. I'm not sorry I did it. It was wrong. I know you viewed the Pit as a glorified Naughty Step, but it just isn't. We couldn't do what you asked.

But Sabretooth getting out changed things. Everyone realized what the Pit was -- and what you'd done.

Not "everyone" as in the Jeans and Scotts and anyone who could imagine themselves on the Quiet Council. The people more like me -- the ones who don't go into combat as we'd likely just die. The mutants you're trying to protect.

We are a persecuted people. We know what bad government looks like, and the Pit is it. With the Sinister Timeline and Beast going completely out of control and everything else?

People don't believe in Krakoa.

And Krakoa -- the island -- feeds off us all.

Krakoa is sick because of that.

We need to be good, or we're nothing.

We're a sick country.

You're making us sick.

I know he's not going to take this well.

[Correspondence...[X]
[Sender.....Cypher]

He doesn't.

I didn't want this.

It had to be a compromise. Moira's experience showed purity failed. So I bent in so many ways...

Mutant separatism? Even mutant ***essentialism?*** I despise the concept. My work has always been that mutants ***are*** humans. It is our oppressors who say that because we are mutants, we are not human. For us to agree is loathsome.

I am alone in that. Apocalypse. Moira. Eri... Max, most of all.

He was always the idealist, not me.

I went along for tactics. Exodus is correct, in that way. If we are bound together, we could survive. It is a lie, but a useful lie. I love that more than I love my dream.

And now Max died on me, Moira betrayed us, Apocalypse left, and I am the one trying to hold ***their*** lie together.

It's up to me.

But you can't do it.

You have to let go.

Can you let go, Professor?

Because if you don't, it ***is*** all over.

He's quiet a long time, and then he speaks...

...and there's a plan.

I have a proposition.

We have failed.

This council's authority is bankrupt.

We will announce the end of the Quiet Council at this year's gala.

Get rid of the old management and promise that the new one will be better.

What?

Many seem to know of this plan. I didn't. Judging by Mystique and Selene's faces, they didn't either.

Why?

We knew you'd object. We didn't have time to debate or to give people a chance to scheme or do something stupid.

We're done.

Oh--I've talked to the Five.

We're on strike until we agree to a regime change.

On strike? I say that you should have stopped anyway.

At least until we can be sure you can't be corru--

We can *never* be @&%&% sure!

That's the whole problem!

Don't. This is a mistake.

This is--

Let me guess: "*The big bad Orchis wants it.*"

Hmm. I'm in as long as this is the end of all the nasty chat about me having to suffer consequences for my actions. I think this idea has merit.

What are you suggesting instead?

Democracy? A very *human* idea.

Maybe. But our democracy will be telepathic.

At least we won't be queuing in the rain. That's something.

"Not being rained upon" is not the revolutionary utopia I was fighting for.

I know all the words. I understand their every meaning.

Sometimes, I feel paralyzed--*all* those words. How can I be sure I'm choosing the right ones?

Hope's observation applies here too: You can never be sure...

...and I've been quiet long enough.

Yeah, it's not perfect... but it's not nothing. It *is* an evolution.

Maybe what we buy today is a chance to evolve?

I know we all kept on talking about "human thinking," but...

...believing you can build a utopia from scratch and it all goes perfectly?

That's the most "human thinking" thing of all.

History is full of fallen utopias put together by those who thought themselves entirely unprecedented people.

You were right, Exodus. We are not a people. We never had a chance to be a people. We're just ***people,*** singular, and we're alone.

We have to find a way to be otherwise. And ***that*** needs time.

We don't ***have*** time.

We do this, we buy Krakoa space. Maybe we can be a people. Maybe we can be the Krakoa you always wanted.

I move to dissolve this council.

Any objections?

Thank you.

I breathe easily for the first time in a year.

NO! DO--

FJ2OWAFA.

What? No, just--

DOUG!

--ﻚﻴﻠ

What are you doing? I will *destroy you* if you hurt a hair on that sweet boy's head.

ﻪﺒﺤﺗ ﻲﺘﻟا ﺔﻴﻠﺤﻟا ﻞﻔﻄﻟا ﺍﺬﻫ ﻪﺳأر ﻰﻠﻋ ﺮﻌﺷ ﺔﻄﻘﻨﺑ ﻲﻨﻳﺫﺆﺗ ﻥﺇ ﺎﻣ ﻞﻌﻔﺗ ﺎﻣ ﺪﻴﺳ ﺎﻳ

The interface isn't working. We can't talk to Krakoa.

I can still mimic Doug's gift.

I'll get an answer...

"I must protect him."

From what, Hope?! From what?

I know, you bald @#$%!

ÒÐÍÐFÝ?ÇÐÍ

FROM WHAT?

Gifts gone. They've put Doug somewhere I can't access him.

Somewhere safe, I guess.

&%&%.

What do you see now, my love?

I see nothing.

I see a blinding white nothing.

We've made a mistake.

Oh, Irene...

...just the *one?*

[Immortal_[0.13]

NEXT

“Deadlocked”

14

Issue:

- Immortal X-Men #13
- Rogue & Gambit #5
- X-Force #42
- New Mutants Lethal Legion #5
- Wolverine #35
- X-Men Red #13
- Deadpool #9
- X-Men: Hellfire Gala 2023 #1
- Astonishing Iceman #1
- X-Men #25